

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method of conducting a game of chance on a gaming machine, comprising:
  - receiving a wager from a player;
  - initiating play of the game of chance;
  - pausing the game of chance; and

5 storing a status of the paused game of chance at a central database linked to and remote from the gaming machine.
2. The method of claim 1, further including:
  - receiving a wager at the same or another gaming machine;
  - 10 retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database;
  - and
  - continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.
- 15 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the game of chance includes a continuing performance.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the game of chance includes a progression of events.

20 5. The method of claim 1, wherein storing a status of the paused game of chance includes associating the status with a personal identifier of the player.

6. The method of claim 5, further including:
  - 25 receiving a wager at the same or another gaming machine;
  - providing the personal identifier to the central database via the same or another gaming machine;
  - retrieving, from the central database, the status of the paused game of chance associated with the personal identifier; and

30 continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the personal identifier is provided using a player tracking card, a keypad, a touch screen, or a biometric measurement.

5 8. The method of claim 1, further including:  
receiving a wager at another gaming machine operating a different game of chance;  
retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database;  
and  
10 if the status meets predetermined criteria, unlocking an otherwise unavailable feature of the different game of chance such that the feature is available to the player.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the predetermined criteria is fulfillment of  
15 predetermined requirements in the game of chance.

10. A method of conducting a game of chance on one or more gaming machines, comprising:  
receiving a wager from a player;  
20 initiating play of the game of chance;  
pausing the game of chance;  
storing a status of the paused game of chance at a central database linked to  
and remote from the gaming machines;  
retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database;  
25 and  
continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein storing a status of the paused game of chance  
30 includes associating the status with a personal identifier of the player.

12. The method of claim 11, further including providing the personal identifier to the central database prior to retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database.

5 13. The method of claim 12, wherein retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database includes retrieving the status associated with the personal identifier.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the personal identifier is provided using a 10 player tracking card, a keypad, a touch screen, or a biometric measurement.

15. A method of conducting a game of chance, comprising:  
receiving a wager from a player at a gaming machine;  
initiating play of the game of chance;  
15 pausing the game of chance;  
receiving a personal identifier from the player;  
storing a status of the paused game of chance at a central database linked to and remote from the gaming machine, the status being associated with the personal identifier;  
20 receiving the personal identifier at the same or another gaming machine;  
retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database;  
and  
continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.

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16. A system for conducting a game of chance, comprising:  
a gaming machine including  
means for receiving a wager from a player;  
means for initiating play of the game of chance; and  
30 means for pausing the game of chance; and  
a central database for storing a status of the paused game of chance, the central database being linked to and remote from the gaming machine.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the same or another gaming machine includes means for receiving a wager; means for retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database; and

5 means for continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.

18. The system of claim 16, wherein the game of chance includes a continuing performance.

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19. The system of claim 16, wherein the game of chance includes a progression of events.

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20. The system of claim 16, wherein the central database associates the status with a personal identifier of the player.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the same or another gaming machine includes:

means for receiving a wager;

20 means for providing the personal identifier to the central database;

means for retrieving, from the central database, the status of the paused game of chance associated with the personal identifier; and

means for continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.

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22. The system of claim 21, wherein the personal identifier is provided using a player tracking card, a keypad, a touch screen, or a biometric measurement.

23. The system of claim 16, wherein another gaming machine operates a different game of chance and includes:

30 means for receiving a wager;

means for retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database; and

means, responsive to the status meeting predetermined criteria, for unlocking an otherwise unavailable feature of the different game of chance such that the feature is available to the player.

5 24. The system of claim 23, wherein the predetermined criteria is fulfillment of predetermined requirements in the game of chance.

25. A system for conducting a game of chance, comprising:  
one or more gaming machines including

10 means for receiving a wager from a player;  
means for initiating play of the game of chance

a central database for storing a status of the paused game of chance, the central database being linked to and remote from the one or more gaming machines;

the one or more gaming machines further including

means for retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database; and

means for continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.